

*“This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you.”*

*(2 Timothy 1:6, NLT)*

You and I are called to constantly “*stir up*” (NKJV) the embers and fuel the fire so we will remain a blazing inferno for Jesus

The fact is that when the fuel of any sort is depleted, fire will eventually go out

If we are going to see the results the early Church in the book of Acts experienced we must be...

***People of the Word***

***Steadfast in Prayer***

***Embrace the Movement of the Holy Spirit***

***We Must Burn for Souls***

***Burning with Praise and Worship***

***Burning for Holiness***

***Burning for Humility***

*“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”” (James 4:6, NKJV)*

God is patient with everyone and will always give us time to repent and self-correct

- He is against pride – He resists it!
- No one wants to be found on the other side of being resisted by God

*“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (James 4:10, NKJV)*

## Burning under Authority

Every person on the planet – whether young, old, male, or female – is under some kind of authority

- Being under authority is an inescapable part of life
- Those who understand this truth and flow with it will find success
- But life does not generally go well for those who disrespect authority or try to sidestep its vital role in life

We can all think of individuals who have struggled with authority and whose negative response to it has resulted in bad circumstances in some aspect of life

*“Let all things be done decently and in order.”*

(1 Corinthians 14:40, NKJV)

- This is a key verse if we are to understand the value and order of authority
- Order – a word that was used to describe the order that the Roman army had, as demonstrated when they erected their camps
- They believed in order right down to the smallest detail
- They normally didn’t engage in last-minute planning
- Things were not simply *“thrown together”* in an unthoughtful manner

If you take a look at the world around us you will see God’s order in all of creation

- Science, nature, mathematics, and the very universe have an undeniable order

This is why an order is found in every level of human life as well

- God has ordered government, society, family, church, and even the human body with a structure or an order
- This makes way for a peaceful, functional existence

When that order is disrupted, it can result in confusion, upheaval, and even revolution

*“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.” (Romans 13:1, NKJV)*

- Authorities – *“those who have received delegated power”*
- It could denote those who hold a public office or spiritual positions and wielded authority that had been given to them

Those entrusted with governmental, societal, family, or spiritual authority have been established by God, and as such, their positions of authority are to be respected

This is a remarkable verse that many of us can struggle with, even today

This was written to believers who were suffering at the hands of wicked Roman rulers

Rather than encourage them to ignore or overthrow Roman authority (*which would have led to chaos*), God instructed them to respect even those authorities who were treating them unjustly

Order and authority are so important to human life

- Children are under the authority of their parents
- Wives are under the authority of their husbands
- Husbands are under the authority of Christ
- Employees are under the authority of their employers
- Employers are under the authority of their superiors
- Students are under the authority of their teachers
- Teachers are under the authority of their school directors and superintendents
- Citizens are under the authority of the rule of law and those government officials, police, and so forth, who enforce the law
- Government is under the authority of its Constitution
- Church members are under the authority of their pastor and elders
- And on and on the list goes

Every person is under some kind of authority in every season from the beginning to the end of life

Adam and Eve tried to sidestep God's authority and defied His instructions

- It opened the door through which sin and death found their way into the human race

From the very start of biblical history, the scriptures demonstrate that tragic consequences occur when authority is disregarded, dishonored, side-stepped, or disobeyed

Submitting to spiritual authority is essential to sustain our spiritual fire

*“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”*

*(Amos 3:3, NKJV)*

Agree or Agreement – *“a coming together to produce a blended sound”*

- It is where we get our English word for symphony

Although each musician is familiar with and can professionally play his or her part, the conductor is familiar with the entire piece being performed

- He or she is the director who tells each instrumentalist when to play, how fast to play, or when to stop playing
- Without a conductor to direct the orchestra, a host of conflicting sounds could be produced

Even though each instrumentalist is prepared professionally, each eye is focused on the directing hand of the conductor

The biblical meaning to this word is having a cooperative attitude and learning to *“play”* one’s part

- To carry out one’s assignment or fulfill one’s role
- Learning to accommodate others
- For anyone to be a part of anything that produces a blended sound we must be submitted to the appointed authority in any sphere of life

Those who refuse to cooperate with the authority figures they are subject to will only add discord to the mix

*“A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing— Life forevermore.” (Psalm 133, NKJV)*

- There is an anointing found in submission and unity
- God commands the blessing there

Regardless of gifted a person may be no one wants to be a partner in life with someone who is defiant and insubordinate

If we want to contribute in any area of life we must learn to cooperate and respect those who have been invested with authority

God Himself is the ultimate Great Conductor who directs and decides

The Bible clearly teaches that there is a prophetic clock that is ticking toward the final countdown and the return of the Lord

Widespread disregard and disrespect for authority will grow even more out of control

*“Authority in the world is being increasingly undermined until at the end all authorities will be overthrown and lawlessness shall rule.” – Watchman Nee*

*“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.” (Matthew 24:12, NKJV)*

- Iniquity – *“without law, lawless, or no moral standard”*
- Depicts a people with no moral standards

Jesus is describing a society that will discard all age-old, biblically agreed-upon moral absolutes at the end of the age

- It will be a day when people throw off all authority as rebellion reaches an all-time high

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, NKJV)*

- Falling Away – *“a mutiny against authority”*

Today we see that all restraints are being thrown off and it will only grow worse and worse on a collision course with the end of the age

*“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.” (2 Thessalonians 2:7, NKJV)*

The widespread disrespect for authority emerging in society is a sign that we are reaching the cusp of this end-time age

As Christians, we must be awakened to what God says about authority so we do not fall prey to the spirit of the age

- Just because the world wonders a stray doesn't mean we should

*“whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.” “But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak **evil** of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption,”*  
*(2 Peter 2:11-12, NKJV)*

*“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” But these speak **evil** of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.”* *(Jude 9–10, NKJV)*

- Evil – “derogatory behavior that involves nasty, shameful, or disrespectful speech”

In both of these verses Peter and Jude state that even angels dare not speak disrespectfully against established authorities

- Yet, at the end of the age people will do what even angels will not do

In other words, a full venting of disrespect will be unleashed in society against all forms of established authority

- Those who are in positions of authority today are under assault
- We must undergird them with prayer

*“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”*

*(1 Timothy 2:1–2, NKJV)*

## Spiritual Authority

*“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9, NKJV)*

- Lord – *“One who has ultimate authority in another’s life”*
- Our entrance into God’s Kingdom and our relationship with Christ are rooted in submission to His absolute authority
- When we recognize Jesus as Lord, we surrender to obey Him as the Supreme Master
- We agree that we are continually submitting to His unquestionable authority
- We have yielded every realm of our lives to Him
- Our will, emotions, passions
- We submit the way we conduct our lives to His management, direction, and control
- This leaves no part of our commitment untouched by His authority

When we are aligned under His authority, you become like a pipe that is cleared of all rubbish and rubble

- A channel through which the power of God can flow from Christ through you to the world around you
- We must continually reassess our lives to make sure we are aligned under Christ’s authority

*“If you want the power and fire of God to flow through you, it is imperative that you are aligned under Christ’s absolute authority.” – Rick Renner*

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

**(Acts 2:42, NKJV)**

- Steadfastly – *“to persevere consistently”*
- It gives the idea that the early believers were *“addicted”* to the teaching of the apostles
- They learned spiritual authority and submission from Jesus Himself
- They are often called *“disciples”*

Disciple – *“a student who is complete submission to a teacher who has a master’s influence in his life”*

- This means they were committed followers of Jesus who explicitly followed whatever Jesus asked them to do

*“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.”*

**(John 13:13, NKJV)**

- Lord – *“One who has ultimate authority in another’s life”*
- Every time they called Him Lord they were acknowledging who He was in their lives
- They were submitted to Jesus’ authority

When Judas Iscariot decided to rebel and go against Christ's authority and go in a different direction, he was eliminated from the team

- The word *“Lord”* still has the same meaning to you and me today

When we call Him Lord we are saying, *“You have absolute authority in my life, and I am submitted to You. I will obey whatever You ask me to do.”*

The early believers were completely submitted, “*addicted*” to local spiritual authority – **Acts 2:42**

- Christ continues to carry out His Lordship over the Church
- He does this largely through spiritual authority He has established inside the Church to help Him
- These are leaders who have real voices that we can hear audibly
- They are visible for us to see and follow
- Among those are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers
- As well as any whom they have chosen to work alongside them
- All such leaders are to be in complete submission to Jesus as the supreme Head of the Church

When we are aligned under Christ’s authority, and under the local spiritual authority He has set over us, that alignment enables us to be channels through which God’s power can flow

- If we are out of sync with that system it will disrupt the flow of God’s power
- Ultimately snuffing out our spiritual fire

If we are to stay in sync with the ways of God’s Kingdom and stay ablaze in our walk with Him, it is essential that we willingly submit to those whom He has established to exercise spiritual authority in our lives

- We must learn to play our part in God’s symphony
- According to the spiritual conductor's God assigns us
- It will produce the opposite effect if we ignore the direction of those God has called to lead the orchestra

*“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:7–8, NKJV)*

- Christ has not changed
- Rule – *“one who has a leading or visible position of influence in your life”*
- A person who has a visible position of spiritual authority or leadership
- Spiritual authority must be someone who has a significant influence in our lives
- It is important to note that no one is a perfect leader

Those with spiritual authority over others must allow the Holy Spirit to take them ever further, higher, deeper in their walk with God

- Of course, that isn't to say that younger less seasoned spiritual leaders might not be placed in authority over those who are more experienced in their walk with God
- That doesn't make him any less their leader
- Spiritual authority isn't about age its about assignment
- It's about the giftings God equips them with to fulfill His divine call
- It's about the spiritual stature and the anointing the leader operates in
- Its also about the character they allow God to cultivate in them

*“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” (1 Corinthians 4:2, NKJV)*

According to **Hebrews 13:7**, the spiritual leader that we are following should be someone that we are so impressed by their faith and godly character we want to imitate them or be like them

- Follow – *“an intentional study of the life, deeds, actions, and thoughts of another person – to attempt to imitate or duplicate their attributes”*
- *“Considering the outcome of their conduct”*

There are no perfect leaders but a spiritual leader must be someone who continually steps forward and makes progress in their lives

*“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”* (**Hebrews 13:17, NKJV**)

- Rule – *“one who has a leading or visible position of influence in your life”*
- By repeating this twice, God makes it clear that he is talking about a person or group of people that have spiritual influence in your life – in the local Church
- Obey – *“to become convinced, coaxed, or swayed from one opinion to the opinion held by another”*
- Submissive – *“to yield willfully”* *“as in a deliberate yielding of military forces”*
- In the military, you do not disrespect your commanding officer
- This word, *submit* is not used by mistake
- We are to recognize those who hold spiritual authority as a soldier would submit to a commanding officer

Hebrews 13:17 says that these spiritual leaders, *“watch out for your souls”*

*“watch”* – *“constant watchfulness”*

- A picture of someone mindful about someone else
- The one to whom you submit should be someone who carries an abiding sense of responsibility for you

*“must give account”* – to give a full report, to be answerable to a superior

- Just as you are responsible for how you have followed the leader, they must give a full report of their service

*“grief”* – *“a groaning or moaning”*

- A person who causes grief would be someone who argues, challenges, fights, or rebuffs those who are trying to help them

*“unprofitable”* – your wrong attitude towards spiritual authority will not be in your best interest

- Does the person leading you avoid you when they see you?
- This might not be a good sign

This issue of spiritual authority is vital to your spiritual health, to the strength of the Church, and to the strength of each believer who makes up the Church

- Every person needs to be under spiritual authority
- There is a miraculous mutual exchange of strength that occurs in such relationships

*“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” (John 10:11, NKJV)*

- In verses 3, 4, and 5 of this chapter, you see the “*shepherd-sheep*” relationship we have with Jesus depicted
- As a part of His flock, we know His voice and will not follow a voice of a stranger
- He restates this principle in verses 14 and 27
- He states, *“I know them and they follow me”*
- This principle will help you in recognizing who is supposed to exercise spiritual authority in your life
- Undershepherds are to guide those whom Jesus has entrusted to them in their respective leadership assignments
- God supernaturally connects people to mutually benefit one another – This is God’s desire for you and your children

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.” (John 13:20, NKJV)*

To live with a fresh fire in your life you have got to come under the spiritual authority that God has established for your life

God wants every believer to come under the Lordship of Christ and under the local spiritual authority whom He sent to be a blessing

*“Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God.” (Psalm 92:13, NKJV)*